

# HOW TO MANAGE A HIGH TECH CEO: A MANUAL

## DO (THESE ARE THE THINGS I WISH YOU TO DO)

When making presentations, remember that I am highly visual. A picture or drawing indeed is worth more than a thousand words with me.

Start your communication with me by first talking about the “headline.” Give me the “big picture” before we step into the weeds. The “big picture” is in the company's and its customers' best interests. Why does what you are telling me matter?

Tell me “why” you are telling me something. Is it just an “FYI?” Do you need a decision made? Do you need thought partnership? Be clear with me.

My thinking tends to bounce between considerable picture/strategic and in-the-weeds operational detail. When meeting with me, be prepared to “go with the flow” of my thinking. Make sure you are ready for both types of questions.

If you want to speak with me, I prefer that you schedule an appointment with Rachel. When you set up the appointment, I prefer that you mention to Rachel the agenda item(s) you wish to discuss. For example, the agenda item could be “Bounce Ideas Off You Regarding XYZ Project.” I’m OK being your thought partner for specific issues. Please be clear with me in advance.

Cultivate a reputation for being low drama.

When talking with me, focus on timelines and completion dates. We are a global company of busy people who come from sectors with different types of urgency. The urgency of an entrepreneurial company differs from an institution of higher education. We are all busy. We all must set priorities. Show me clear

accountabilities for people involved, plus timelines and completion dates. This will help to ensure that things do not fall between the cracks.

Take vacation both in the broader calendar sense and micro pockets during the day. I respect your need to recharge batteries to be at optimal effectiveness.

Inform me ASAP if there is bad news.

Put on your business hat and first discuss what is in the best interests of the company and its customers before you dive into operational issues in your function.

PERMISSION (YOU MAY THINK I DO NOT WISH YOU TO DO THIS, BUT I DO. AND IF I AM EVER CRITICAL OF YOU FOR DOING WHAT I ASKED ON THIS LIST, PRINT OUT THIS LIST AND REMIND ME THAT I GAVE YOU PERMISSION).

You may require more communication from me than I am giving you. Please send me an email and ask for feedback.

If you need more clarification, please ask.

After a meeting, ask me to rate my agreement with your course of action on a scale of 0 (totally disagree) to 10 (totally agree). This will force me to be transparent with you. You deserve clarity, and I want to give it to you. But you are going to need to help. My default may be to say, "Yes." But there are many shades of "yes!"

Sometimes, my opinion on a 0-10 scale is not good enough. You need a "yes/no" decision. You have my permission to ask me for one, but I expect you to respect that my decision-making time may be different from yours. I am open to a discussion with you about WHEN you get that "yes/no" decision.

You may be the type of person who values making quick decisions. I respect that. I may be someone who needs more time than you to think things through.

Feel free to repeat the point if I am “missing” something from your argument. If I am not “getting” its importance to the business, free to say “on a scale of 0-10 I think this issue is a number x). I value precision in communication and calling things “urgent,” “important” does not help communications. It is my job to sort through many proposals, all described as “urgent” and “important.”

Ask me to attend meetings, but do not take it personally if I say, “No.” I appreciate the invitation and try to be strategic about using my time.

You are free to send me emails on weekends. I may respond on Monday.

**DON'T (DON'T GO HERE!)**

Do not be a victim. Figure out a way to make things happen.

Only ask for meetings on weekends if unique circumstances dictate the need.

Do not dump a problem on my desk: present a problem and propose options. Tell me which option you prefer.

Do not come to me to complain about someone else without first having shown me that you have tried and failed to resolve issues with this person yourself.

Do not serve me greasy food. I try to eat healthy. 😊